

Children's Department

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Fairy flute

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These poems are full of fairy magic—and as light and gossamer-like in their gaiety and spirit as the fairies themselves. And such titles as “The Fairy Lover,” “The Fairy Ball,” “The Willow Princesses,” and “The Fairy Tailor” add to the appeal of the verses.

Rose Fyleman is one of the best-loved writers of children's verse. She began as a child of ten to weave her fairy songs. Later the initials R. F. were eagerly anticipated in “Punch” where week after week her charming little verses appeared.

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BY ROSE FYLEMAN

VERSE

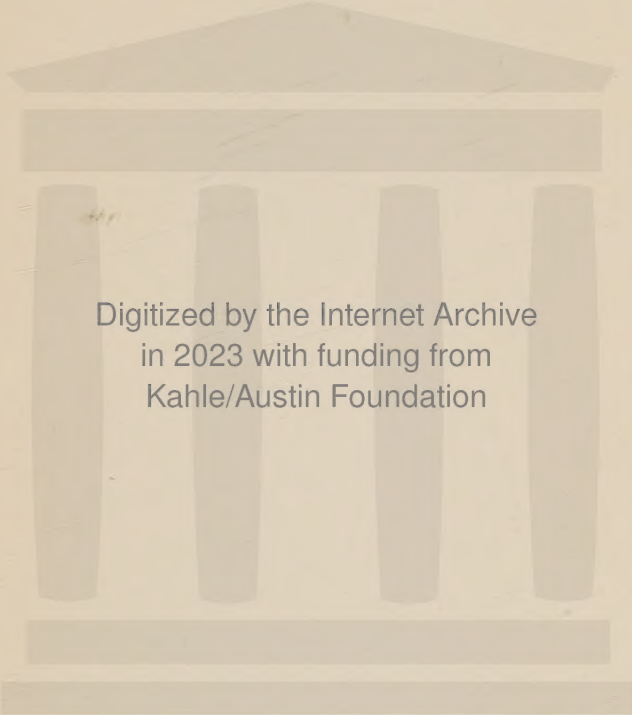
Fairies and Chimneys

The Fairy Green

The Fairy Flute

TALES

The Rainbow Cat



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A FAIRY IN THE APPLE TREE
THREW AN APPLE DOWN TO ME.

THE FAIRY FLUTE

BY
ROSE FYLEMAN



GARDEN CITY NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & COMPANY, INC.

1929

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BY GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY**

THE FAIRY FLUTE. I

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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TO *All*
MY NEPHEWS AND NIECES

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THE FAIRY FLUTE

THE FAIRY FLUTE

CONSOLATION

You may be very ugly and freckledy and small
And have a little stubby nose that's not a nose at all;
You may be bad at spelling and you may be worse
at sums,

You may have stupid fingers that your Nanna says
are thumbs,

And lots of things you look for you may never, never
find,

But if you love the fairies—you don't mind.

You may be rather frightened when you read of
wolves and bears

Or when you pass the cupboard-place beneath the
attic stairs;

You may not always like it when thunder makes a
noise

The Fairy Flute

CONSOLATION [Continued]

That seems so much, much bigger than little girls
and boys;

You may feel rather lonely when you waken in the
night,

But if the fairies love you—*it's all right.*

The Fairy Flute

IF YOU MEET A FAIRY

If you meet a fairy
Don't run away;
She won't want to hurt you,
She'll only want to play.

Show her round the garden,
Round the house too,
She'll want to see the kitchen
(I know they always do).

Find a tiny present
To give her when she goes,
They love silver paper
And little ribbon bows.

I knew a little girl once
Who saw twenty-three
Playing in the orchard
As jolly as could be.

The Fairy Flute

IF YOU MEET A FAIRY [*Continued*]

They asked her to dance with them
To make a twenty-four;
She ran to the nursery
And hid behind the door.

Hid behind the nursery door—
(What a thing to do!)
She grew up very solemn
And rather ugly too.

If you meet a fairy
Remember what I say,
Talk to her nicely
And don't run away.

The Fairy Flute

FAIRY LORE

FAIRIES learn to dance before they learn to walk;
Fairies learn to sing before they learn to talk;
Fairies learn their counting from the cuckoo's call;
They do not learn Geography at all.

Fairies go a-riding with witches on their brooms
And steal away the rainbows to brighten up their
rooms;

Fairies like a sky-dance better than a feast;
They have a birthday once a week at least.

Fairies think the rain as pretty as the sun;
Fairies think that trespass-boards are only made
for fun;

Fairies think that peppermint's the nicest thing they
know;

I *always* take a packet when I go.

*Whispering I have a story for them
wherever you go*

The Fairy Flute

EVERY FAIRY HAS A STAR

EVERY fairy has a star
Where all her tiny treasures are,
And there her faithful gnome,
As soon as she goes out at night
Against the window sets a light
To guide his lady' home.

And at the open door he stands
And waves his little twinkling hands
As down to earth she goes;
Then sits and waits the long night through,
And sometimes sings a song or two
And sometimes has a doze.

But at the earliest crow of cock
Back to the sky the fairies flock,
And at their doors they stand and knock

The Fairy Flute

EVERY FAIRY HAS A STAR [*Continued*]

(The air is keen and chill)—

They do not wait to see the sun;

Straight to their little beds they run;

The stars are darkened one by one

And all the sky is still.

The Fairy Flute

THE FAIRY LOVER

You walk in your orchard, you sit in your bower
Mid plentiful treasure of fruit and of flower ;
But you shall have pleasaunces brighter than these,
With magical blossoms and magical trees.

Your train is of damask, rich fold upon fold,
Your gown is of crimson, your shoes are of gold ;
But a mantle of rainbows shall wrap you about,
Besprinkled with star-dust within and without.

Your ladies-in-waiting are gracious and fair
And a little page stands by the side of your chair ;
But an army of goblins shall do your behest
And fly at your bidding to East and to West.

You shall sit on a cushion of velvety moss,
Embroidered with sunbeams across and across,
And a grasshopper chorus shall make you good cheer
Or charm you with delicate lullabies, dear.

The Fairy Flute

THE FAIRY LOVER [Continued]

I will tap at your window some moon-silvered night,
And when you lean down through the jessamine white
My fairy-swift wings I shall softly unfurl
And bear you away to my palace of pearl.

The Fairy Flute

THE FAIRY TAILOR

SITTING on the flower-bed beneath the hollyhocks
I spied the tiny tailor who makes the fairies' frocks;
There he sat a-stitching all the afternoon
And sang a little ditty to a quaint wee tune:

“Grey for the goblins, blue for the elves,
Brown for the little 'gnomes that live by themselves,
White for the pixies that dance upon the green—
But where shall I find me a robe for the Queen?”

All about the garden his little men he sent,
Up and down and in and out unceasingly they went.
Here they stole a blossom, there they pulled a leaf,
And bound them up with gossamer into a glowing
sheaf.

Petals of the pansy for little velvet shoon,
Silk of the poppy for a dance beneath the moon,
Lawn of the jessamine, damask of the rose,
To make their pretty kirtles and airy furbelows.

The Fairy Flute

THE FAIRY TAILOR [Continued]

Never roving pirates back from Southern seas
Brought a store of treasures home beautiful as these.
They heaped them all about him in a sweet gay pile,
But still he kept a-stitching and a-singing all the
while:

“Grey for the goblins, blue for the elves,
Brown for the little gnomes that live by themselves,
White for the pixies that dance on the green,
But who shall make a royal gown to deck the
Fairy Queen?”

The Fairy Flute

AT DAWN

THOUGH the fairies meet by night
In the moonlit spaces,
Often in the morning light
You will see their traces ;
If you rise at early dawn
When the birds are waking,
You may find upon the lawn
Tents of fairy making.

In the meadows here and there,
Where the soft wind passes,
Elfin lines of gossamer
Stretch between the grasses ;
And if you will look about
Soon you will discover
Fairy washing hanging out
All among the clover.

In the quiet woods you might,
If your ways be wary,

The Fairy Flute

AT DAWN [Continued]

Even hope to get a sight

Of a little fairy

On a lily-leaf, perchance,

Broad and smooth and level,

Practising her tiny dance

For the evening revel.

The Fairy Flute

THE GREEN LOCH

FAR in the hills the Green Loch lies,
Its constant emerald mocks at the skies;
Though they be garmented grey or blue
Never the Green Loch changes hue;
For at earliest dawn, when the winds are still,
Over the brow of the western hill
The fairies come in a happy throng
With elfin laughter and elfin song
Trooping down to the water-side
To bathe in its cool enchanted tide.
Over and under they flash about,
They race with the shy little silver trout,
They twist and tumble and dart and dive
Till all the lake is alight and alive,
And glows with a tremulous sparkling sheen
Like the jewelled robe of an Eastern queen.

But ere the morning has well begun
They all come leaping forth to the sun.

The Fairy Flute

THE GREEN LOCH [Continued]

They hang for a shimmering moment there
Shaking their curls in the warm bright air,
While the water drops from their delicate wings
And dapples the lake with quivering rings,
Then rise like thistledown over the trees
And float away on the heather-sweet breeze.

They leave not a sign, they leave not a trace,
A slumberous calm lies over the place;
Only the green, green waters bide
To tell the secret they never can hide.

The Fairy Flute

THE SKYLARK

OF all the birds the fairies love the skylark much
the best;

They come with little fairy gifts to seek his hidden
nest.

They praise his tiny slender feet and silken suit of
brown,

And with their gentle hands they smooth his feathers
softly down.

They cluster round with glowing cheeks and bright
expectant eyes,

Waiting the moment that shall bring the freedom of
the skies;

Waiting the double-sweet delight that only he can
give—

(Oh, kings might surely spurn their crowns to live
as fairies live).

To ride upon a skylark's back between his happy
wings,

The Fairy Flute

THE SKYLARK [*Continued*]

To float upon the edge of heaven and listen while
he sings—

The dreams of mortals scarce can touch so perfected
a bliss,

And even fairies could not know a greater joy than
this.

The Fairy Flute

IN BOND STREET

UPON her little velvet hat
A silken tassel hung,
And to the very end of that
A tiny fairy clung.

Among her curls he bobbed about
And played at hide-and-seek
With every dimple that came out
Upon her chin or cheek.

This is a common sight perchance
For Londoners to see.
It seemed to draw no curious glance
From anyone but me.

Along the street I watched her go
Serenely unaware;
And still he tumbled to and fro
(It seemed so strange she should not know)
Among her golden hair.

The Fairy Flute

TIMOTHY

My cat Timothy who has such lovely eyes
Is really not a cat at all; it's only a disguise.
A witch cast a spell on him a long time since
And changed him to a pussy-cat; but once he was
a Prince.

On warm clear nights when a big moon is out
He steps into the garden and never turns about,
But walks down the path with his quiet proud air—
He knows that the fairies are waiting out there.

The fairies go a-dancing, a-dancing in a ring,
He sits in the middle with a crown like a king,
High on a throne in the middle of the grass,
And the fairies stop capering to curtsy as they
pass.

Some day, some day when the spell is done
He will be a Prince again. *Won't* that be fun?
He will come to seek me and kiss my lily hand
And take me on his foaming steed to reign in
fairyland.

The Fairy Flute

FAIRY LULLABY FOR A MORTAL

SLEEP, oh sleep, for the night is still;
The friendly moon peers over the hill;
Cradled soft on the bosom of night
Smiling she scatters her wistful light
Where fairy lovers their trystings keep;
But the children of men must sleep, must sleep.

Sleep, oh sleep, for your days are long;
The stars shall sing your slumber-song
Clear and bright as their silver flames,
All made up of their own sweet names,
Falling softly from star to star—
Mera, Murphid and Aladfar.

Sleep, oh sleep; with never a sound
We will circle mazily round and around;
We will wrap you close in a web of dreams
Shot with delicate fairy gleams;
With our soft, soft wings we will brush away
The sorrowful darkness that comes with the day.

The Fairy Flute

FAIRY LULLABY FOR A MORTAL [Continued]

Sleep, oh sleep, for the night grows late;

Over the hill our comrades wait.

How can we go when the gifts we brought,

For all our loving, have served you nought?

How can we leave you and know you weep?

Will you not hush you, and smile, and sleep?

The Fairy Flute

THE CANARY

HE used to be a fairy once,
A little singing fairy;
He would not work, he would not play,
He only sat and sang all day—
So now he's a canary.

They sent him out of fairyland,
They sent him here to me
The day that I was six years old;
His little house of shining gold
Hangs in the nursery.

He's taught me lots of lovely things
I never should have guessed;
He's told me what they say and do
(They all have wings—it's really true)
And how the Queen is dressed.

The Fairy Flute

THE CANARY [*Continued*]

He flits about the house at night

A little lonely fairy;

But nobody is there to see,

And no one knows—excepting me—

He's not a real canary.

The Fairy Flute

RAINY MORNING

As I was walking in the rain
I met a fairy down a lane.
We walked along the road together,
I soon forgot about the weather.
He told me lots of lovely things:
The story that the robin sings,
And where the rabbits go to school,
And how to know a fairy pool,
And what to say and what to do
If bogles ever bother you.

The flowers peeped from hedgy places
And shook the raindrops from their faces,
And furry creatures all the way
Came popping out and said "Good-day."
But when we reached the little bend,
Just where the village houses end,
[34]

The Fairy Flute

RAINY MORNING [*Continued*]

He seemed to slip into the ground,
And when I looked about I found
The rain was suddenly all over
And the sun shining on the clover.

The Fairy Flute

THIS IS THE WAY THE FAIRIES SING

THIS is the way the fairies sing:
They all stand round in a shining ring
On quiet nights when the moon is high,
And lift their faces up to the sky.
They read the music out of the stars,
There aren't any notes and there aren't any bars.
And sweet their song as the clover flower,
And soft it is as a summer shower,
And gay as leaves that the June airs shake,
And sad as the mist on an autumn lake.
None shall light on a lovelier thing
Than the magical song that the fairies sing.

This is the way the fairies dance:
They point their toes and they leap and prance
Over and under and round and round,
Now in the air and now on the ground,

The Fairy Flute

THE WAY THE FAIRIES SING [Continued]

In a shimmering, glimmering moon-lit maze
To a wonderful music that nobody plays.
And swift their dance as the coming of spring,
And light as the touch of a butterfly's wing,
And strange as the gleams in a stormy sky
And changing-bright as the peacock's dye.
Oh, lucky are you if you get the chance
To learn the way that the fairies dance.

The Fairy Flute

THE FAIRY BALL

"I AM asked to the ball to-night, to-night;
What shall I wear, for I must look right?"
"Search in the fields for a lady-smock;
Where could you find you a prettier frock?"

"I am asked to the ball to-night, to-night;
What shall I do for my jewels bright?"
"Trouble you not for a brooch or a ring,
A daisy-chain is the properest thing."

"I am asked to the ball to-night, to-night;
What shall I do if I shake with fright?"
"When you are there you will understand
That no one is frightened in Fairyland."

The Fairy Flute

USEFUL HINTS

FAIRY flannel is the skin of peaches,
Fairy brushes are the nuts of beeches,
Velvet bulrushes are fairy pillows,
Fairy muffs are made of pussy-willows.

The Fairy Flute

THE FAIRY FLUTE

MY brother has a little flute
Of gold and ivory,
He found it on a summer night
Within a hollow tree.
He plays it every morning
And every afternoon,
And all the little singing-birds
Listen to the tune.
He plays it in the meadows,
And everywhere he walks
The flowers start a-nodding
And dancing on their stalks.
He plays it in the village,
And all along the street
The people stop to listen,
The music is so sweet.
And none but he can play it
'And none can understand,
Because it is a fairy flute
And comes from Fairyland.

The Fairy Flute

THE APPLE-TREE

I stood beneath the apple-tree,
The apples were so good to see;
Very high above my head
I saw them shining round and red.

A robin sang a tiny song,
And after I had waited long
A fairy in the apple-tree
Threw an apple down to me.

The Fairy Flute

A STRANGE PAIR

THE witch, the witch that lives in the wood
Is not very pretty and not very good;
Her face is brown and her eyes are black,
A fierce old pussy-cat sits on her back
With a sharp thin tail sticking up like a spire,
While her mistress crouches over the fire,
Be the day cold or be the day hot,
Watching her strange little bubbling pot.

The gobliny dwarf that lives on the hill
He lies in the heather so still, so still.
But on big dark nights when there isn't a moon
He puts on his cloak and his dancing shoon
And runs along like a soft shy mouse
Till he comes to the door of the witch's house.
"Ho!" he cries, "it is junketing weather";
And off they go on the spree together.

Off they go on the tail of the wind:
The great black pussy-cat sails behind.

The Fairy Flute

A STRANGE PAIR [*Continued*]

Haven't you heard them banging about?

Haven't you heard them whistle and shout?

Haven't you seen them now and again

Peering in at the window-pane?

Oh, but I tell you it's better to hide

When the witch and the goblin are out for a ride.

The Fairy Flute

THE WILLOW PRINCESSES

THE tall princesses in the willow tree
They move their lazy, lovely heads about,
They wave their arms, their hair goes stream-
ing out,
Their rustling dresses shimmer like the sea.

But presently they cease to sway and swing
And stand quite still, and whisper gentle words,
Quietly calling to the little birds
To perch upon their pretty hands and sing.

The Fairy Flute

A VISITOR

I HEARD a little tiny noise behind the cupboard door
And something soft and small and quick flashed right
across the floor.

The day had very nearly gone and I could hardly
see;

I do so wish that it would come again to visit me;
The whole day long I've looked and looked and
looked about the house,

I think it was a fairy. *Nurse* thinks it was a mouse.

The Fairy Flute

THE LITTLE PRINCE

My mother is queen and my father is a king
And I have a garden with pretty birds that sing,
Where pansies and marigolds and hollyhocks grow
And four little apple-trees planted in a row.

My father is a king and my mother is a queen
And I have a little page dressed all in green,
A treasure-mine in Barbary, an orange-grove in
Spain,
And a little brown monkey on a long gold chain.

The Fairy Flute

TEMPER

“Blow out the light,” they said, they said
 (She’s got to the very last page) ;
“Blow out the light,” they said, they said,
“It’s dreadfully wicked to read in bed ;”
Her eyes grew black and her face grew red
 And she blew in a terrible rage.

She put out the moon, she did, she did,
 So frightfully hard she blew,
She put out the moon, she did, she did ;
Over the sky the darkness slid,
The stars all scuttled away and hid—
 (A very wise thing to do).

But please don’t whisper the tale about,
 She’d get into trouble, she would ;
Please don’t whisper the tale about,
If anyone else should ever find out
She’d get into trouble without a doubt,
 And now she’s *ever* so good.

The Fairy Flute

BEST

I LIKE to wear my party frock
That Auntie bought in town,
My patent shoes with shiny toes,
My Sunday hat with little bows,
And ribbons hanging down.
I like to hear the people say:
"How pretty Nancy looks to-day!"

But Daddy shakes his head and says:
"You'll make her very vain."
And Grannie says: "She should be dressed
In everything that's of the best
But rather neat and plain."
And Mother says: "My goodness me!
Who *can* this lovely lady be?"

The Fairy Flute

WHAT SHALL I BE

I SHALL be a lady
As pretty as you please,
And I shall have a garden
With lots of flowers and trees,
A pretty little kitchen
With rows of shining pots,
A hothouse full of peaches
And a nursery full of cots.

The Fairy Flute

SOMETIMES

SOME days are fairy days. The minute that you wake
You have a magic feeling that you never could
mistake;

You may not see the fairies, but you know that
they're about,

And any single minute they might all come popping
out;

You want to laugh, you want to sing, you want to
dance and run,

Everything is different, everything is fun;

The sky is full of fairy clouds, the streets are fairy
ways—

Anything might happen on truly fairy days.

Some nights are fairy nights. Before you go to bed
You hear their darling music go chiming in your
head;

The Fairy Flute

SOMETIMES [Continued]

You look into the garden, and through the misty
grey

You see the trees all waiting in a breathless kind
of way.

All the stars are smiling; they know that very soon
The fairies will come singing from the land behind
the moon.

If only you could keep awake when Nurse puts out
the light . . .

Anything might happen on a truly fairy night.

The Fairy Flute

PREPARE!

BUNNY, bunny, smooth your fur,
Wash your little face;
Dormouse, wake you up and stir
Lest you lose your place.
Hasten, squirrel, don't be shy—
The Queen is coming by.

Linnetts, wrens, be ready, please,
With your sweetest notes,
Perch among the waiting trees,
Tune your tiny throats.
Skylark, won't you leave the sky?
The Queen is coming by.

Goblins, stop your naughty tricks,
Hold yourselves in wait;
Witches, raise your besom sticks
For an arch of state.
Quickly, fairies, hither fly—
The Queen is coming by.

The Fairy Flute

A VOYAGE

THEY took me out a-sailing—
The boat was made of glass;
We sailed upon the little clouds,
The stars came out in shining crowds
So thick we scarce could pass.
But feather-light through all the night
About the sky we sped;
There were no oars with which to row,
There was no tiniest wind to blow
Though all the sails were spread.

They took me out a-sailing—
We anchored by the moon;
The golden door was open wide,
We saw a garden-ground inside
Where it was light as noon.
And fairy folk looked out and spoke:
“Come in, come in and play!”

The Fairy Flute

A VOYAGE [Continued]

We climbed a little silver stair—

It was so beautiful in there

I wished that I might stay.

They took me out a-sailing—

Oh, strange the tales I heard

Of charmed adventures in the skies

Beyond the gaze of human eyes,

Beyond the flight of bird.

The stars went out, I looked about,

I saw the dewdrops gleam

Among the cobwebs on the lawn

As we came home at break of dawn . . .

It was not all a dream.

The Fairy Flute

A COMPLAINT

YOU'VE stolen all our mushrooms!
When friends come in to tea
In Fairyland it is the rule
To offer them a satin stool;
The grass is often very wet
And furniture is hard to get,
As you must all agree.

You've stolen all our mushrooms
And left not one behind.
If people came by night and day
And took your prettiest chairs away
And made them all into a stew
Without so much as thanking you,
Now would you call it kind?

You've stolen all our mushrooms,
And, if you don't take care,
We'll go about the fields at night

The Fairy Flute

A COMPLAINT [Continued]

And paint the toadstools brown and white,
And you'll be punished for your greed
By being very ill indeed—
So you had best beware.

The Fairy Flute

THE FAIRIES GIVE THANKS

To all kind folk who make delightful gardens

Where we may live,

Enjoying days and nights of busy leisure

Amid devices fashioned for our pleasure,

Our thanks we give.

For dancing-lawns and gravelled jousting-places,

For guardian trees,

For ferny thickets strewn with moss-grown
mountains

And lily-pools and waterfalls and fountains—

For all of these.

Charged are we also by our little comrades

The gentle birds,

That we their messages of thanks should bring you,

Since they from grateful hearts can only sing you

Songs without words.



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